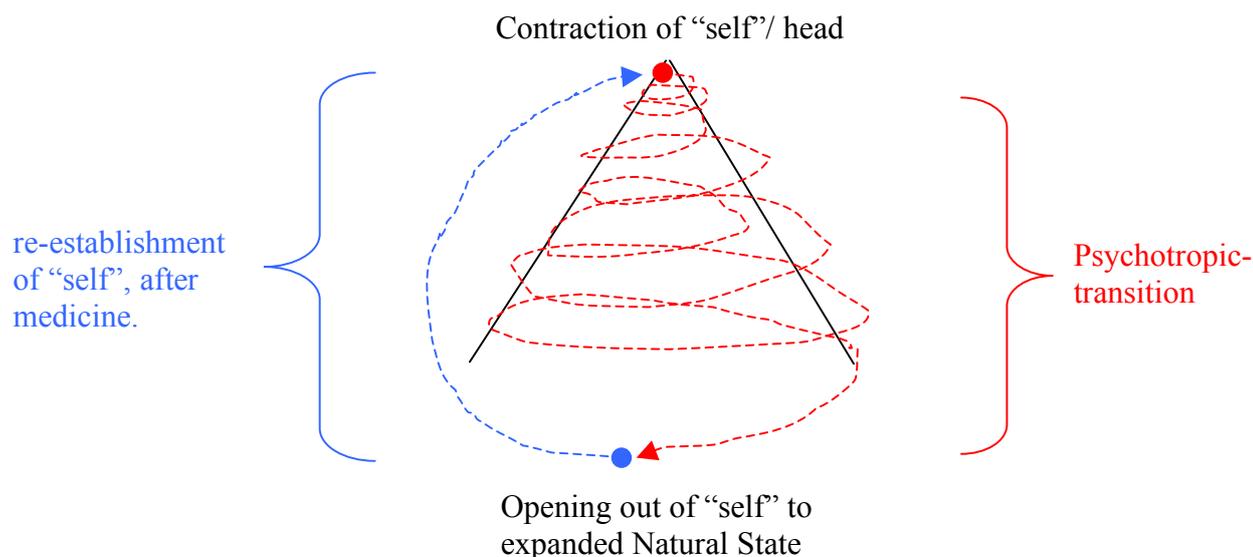


Between worlds: the transitional place of the psychedelic experience, and the nature of ripeness.

The profound medicines of the ancient shamans in the form of the psychotropic herbs are extremely powerful insights into the nature of the human condition. It feels as if there is a tunnel between the human condition of narrowness out into the seas of natural life which the human transitions during the taking of the medicine, a longing to return completely to ego-less natural state but a re-surfacing back into the human-condition afterwards....



However, because of the nature of the effect of the medicine, very often we can assume that our memories and ideas of the events of the experiences are more important than anything else. There is a longing to be in the state of the herb's lore, but at the same time an equal and opposite fear and dislike for the effects....why and what is this?

There is a desperate want to be in the feeling of the herb-induced state because this is a transitional state, it is between the human world of "self" and "me", moving to the animal-plant and natural world state which is without this. This transition therefore has its significant problems. While it is blissful on the one hand to be "back home" and to feel welcomed by all of creation, it is at the same time a wrenching pain of loss and grief and a significant fear of death, for in order that one should fully and completely drop into the state of re-connection with life, the "self" simply has to die away.

The "hallucinations" as they are described are very often the strange energy of the "self" struggling against the energy of the herb which essentially rids the body of "self" in its normal state for a while, it makes the "self" porous, as though it is utterly insignificant. The struggle is what creates the distortions or hallucinations. The world of the plant or animal is without these kind of distortions/ hallucinations, but also without the contraction of "self" so a human's interaction with this drug is very specific to the human condition. As a result what we feel when involved with the

medicine is the turbulence of letting go. Through this turbulence there are enormous realizations that obliterate the “self” at every angle. The clarity that the “me” is not solid/ real and simply transitory and that there is no place to go, nothing to “do”, all this hits the “self” like waves. Each time the “me” struggles against this, forming all kinds of deep and dark hallucinations, fears and tensions in the body. This is how a “bad trip” feels, it is as though you are battered by the waves and you want to find a secure place, at the same time knowing deeply that there is no place which is secure. This is deeply frightening, in fact the deepest fear we face. Hence a “good trip” is often when there is less tension and a person can simply let go into the stream of things and allow things to pass through. As you can see “good” and “bad” are simply different states of the energy of a person at the time of ingestion of the herb.

In either case it is extremely rare that the experience actually resolves the “self”, it simply allows it to let go of it for a short while and in this there is healing. The nature of these herbs is just like any other experience in life, when there is a great struggling there is suffering as a result, when there is a feeling of opening then things can pass through easily, this is just the way it goes. No one can intend to let go or not at a particular time, this is all in nature’s hands. Hence one cannot decide if one will go through this tunnel easily or not, but either way it is just as nature intends it.

In one way there is no difference in taking the herbs or not... for in the end there is always the same conundrum: why am “I” still here, why has the “I” not perished and what can I do to let this go, these are the same questions before and after the medicine. However the processes of taking this medicine point out what it really means to lose “self” and how frightening this is, it is the end of the world of “me” and it feels as though this is a huge deal. To some degree this gives more clarity to the huge body of energy that is the human condition and the profundity of what will happen as nature shifts and either the “self” begins to die off within the human or if, as it seems to be doing, the madness of it takes over and annihilates the whole species. It is clear that this doesn't matter in the big scheme of things, as we know nature will always return, a million years to the world is like a blink of an eye and modern humans have been around for a tenth of this time...(please see this excellent animation by Blu for a perspective of chronological time of life on earth <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMoKcsN8wM8>)

Again, however, for the “self” it is a great tragedy that humans may not continue. As we go through the experience of the Shamanistic herbs we see that there is no free will, no choice, no right or wrong, no good or bad. We also see the helplessness of the human condition and the clarity with which every emotion that is experienced in these states, be they of bliss and virtue, of gladness and sadness, of grief or anger or anything that we call “emotion”, is literally heightened to explosion in these states. These are true to their original meaning, “disturbances” no more no less, they are old disturbances that are held in the natural animal body which itself simply isn't interested in, or is being dragged around by it all, and we are completely tired out by it.

The nature of our movement through the herbal-Shaman is actually something which opens out the state of what we are, it puts into context all these expressions and for a moment sees them for the reality that they are. Then we return to the place we were in before but something has been dropped, an old emotion has been seen through or an

old pattern broken. While this is a healing, it is by no means the “magic bullet”. The process of the medicine does gradually change a person, allowing them to be more accepting of what nature is and to become more clearly what they are, but the process of complete breaking down of the ‘self’ only actually occurs when nature intends. Even finding the right moment for healing to happen is a result of something larger occurring to shift this. In some ways when taken at a time that is forced, taking the medicine can reinforce and amplify what a person believes himself or herself to be as they come out of the experience, because they desperately cling to what they know in order to stabilize themselves...even so this also part of a larger process.

Taken at the “right” time, when there is a “pregnancy” of feeling, one wants something about one to die, or when one has deeply dark suicidal tendencies coming from depression and a drowning in this, this herb is beyond any other to help this. In some situations of depression brought about by anxiety and tension again this herb can be used because it opens outwards and expands. The place where this medicine isn’t useful is when a person is already manic, anxious or euphoric a lot of the time, as this can send them into a state that is too strong for their system to manage. Although the medicine does balance this too, it is said that it gives you what you need because it has both a yin and yang quality in it and therefore it can displace the aspect which is missing. However for those of a nervous disposition these herbs need to be taken with care and during the months afterwards a sensitive person needs support.

These herbs are considered to be prime herbs by the tribal cultures that use them, often referred to as the mother of all other herbs or the origin of all medicine. The quality of these herbs is pungent in general and energetically this means something that opens out and expands, it melts the barrier between the egoic processes of the egoic mind and how this holds the body in check, as a result when taking these medicines the body can use much more of its potential energy, it becomes much more efficient and the body may feel stronger if a person has been in a stagnated mental state, or the person may need to sleep deeply if the mind is agitated and has been driving the body to exhaustion ...whatever the mental process at work the herb breaks down the barrier and allows the body and its natural animal sense and expression to take over. Used most strongly in states of contracted depression and latent energy, a person can experience the power and strength of the body like never before as the narrowness of the mental state is broken and there is a realization of the power the body has naturally. The use of these herbs therefore is for dispersal of contraction of the egoic mental state, this is the prime role.

In the end while Ayahuasca and the other shamanistic herbs can open our eyes and show us ourselves beyond anything else out there, because it is not to do with an intentioned process but to do with you and the herb mixing and forming something new, because of this it is still one of the most vital connections available for the human. However, for it to bring about a new world and for “self” to evaporate will take more than this herb, it requires the timing of the whole universe and the unraveling of nature, and while this herb and its passing on from person to person is part of this process it doesn't work completely, for right at this moment in history the “self” still holds on. Until an apple is ripe to be plucked no matter how you shake the tree it will still not fall.

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